

A Student's Guide to VOTING



Dear parents and educators,

The Office of Elections for the City of Richmond is proud to present this activity book for students from K to 8th grade. The purpose of this activity book is to help students understand civic duties and to become informed citizens participating in the democratic process. Furthermore, this activity book will teach students who represents them in the city government.

Virginia is unique because every city is independent from a county. There are 38 independent cities that operate separately from a city. Countrywide, there are 3148 counties. Louisiana calls their counties “parishes” and Alaska calls it “boroughs.”

We encourage educators and parents to share this activity book with your students or children. It is never too early for anyone to learn about their local government and their civic duties.

For any questions or comments, call us at 804-646-5950.

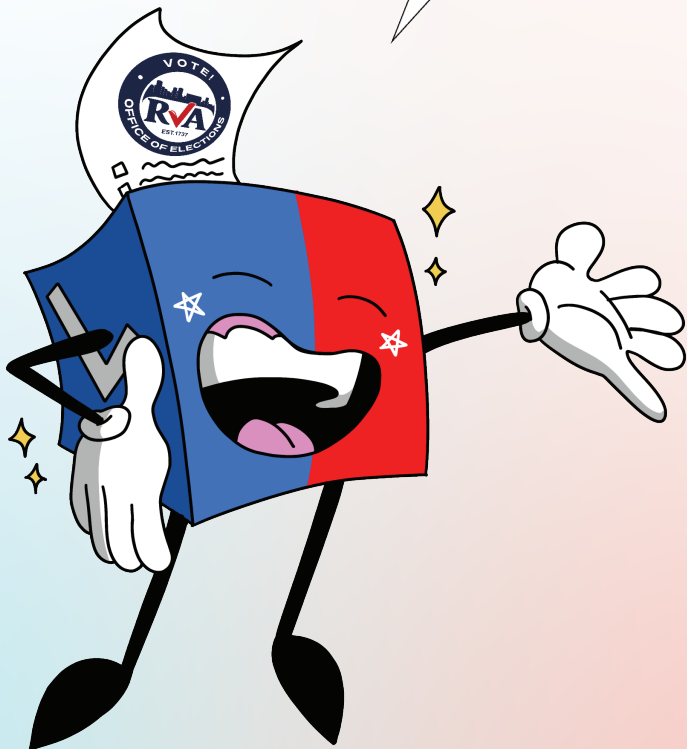
Signed

Keith Balmer
General Registrar for the City of Richmond

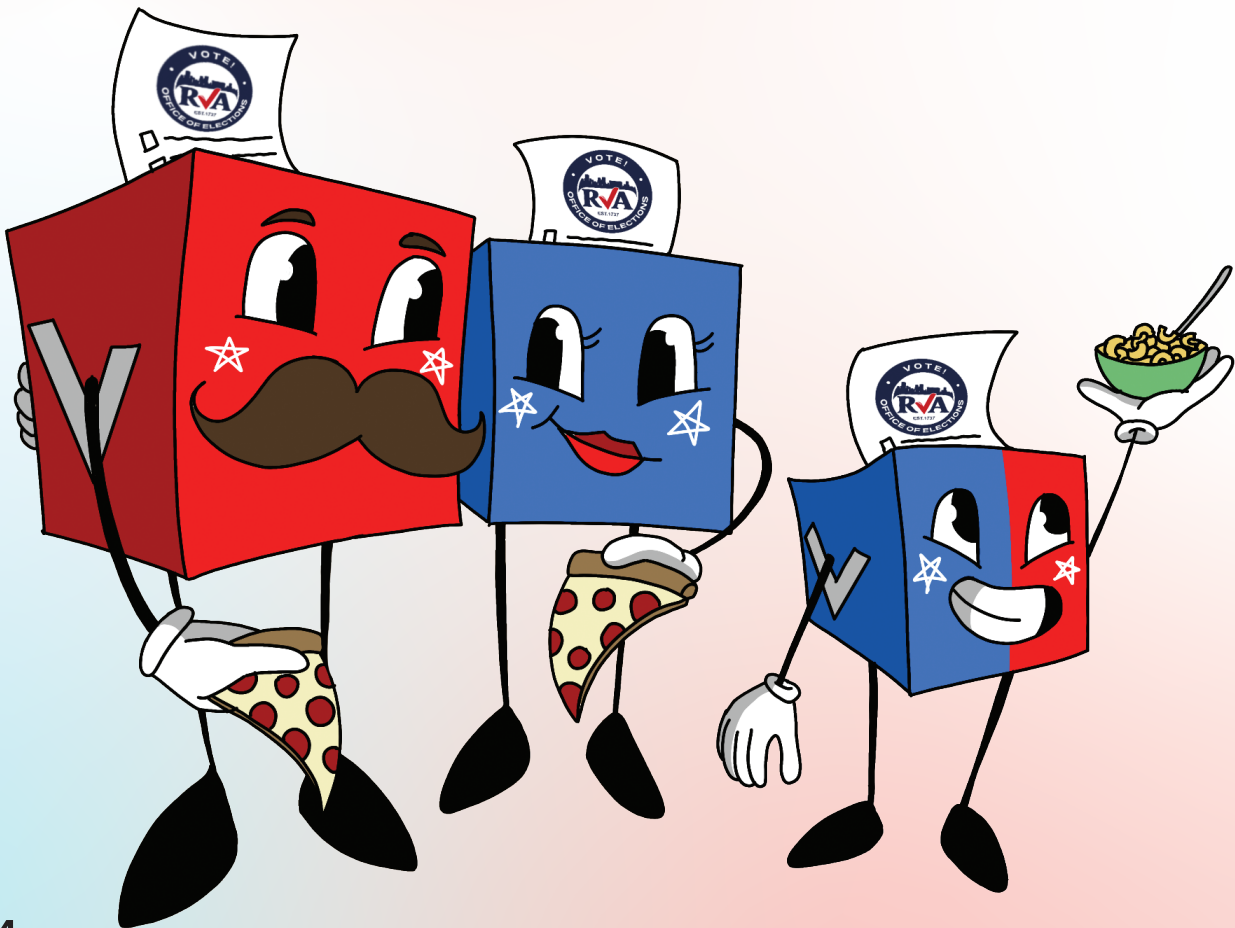


Hi!

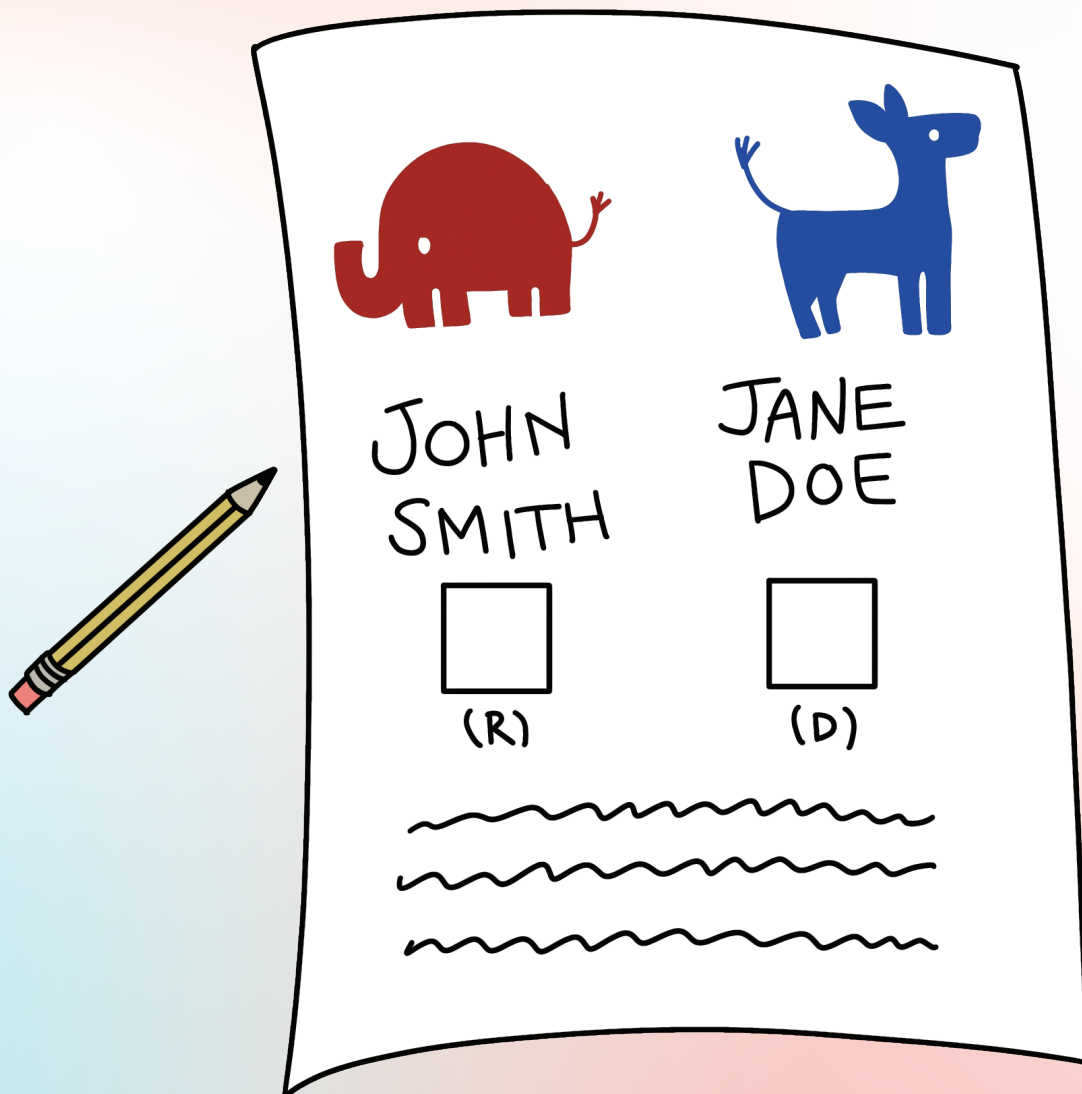
My name is Billy the Ballot Box. A ballot box is where you cast your vote and in this activity book, I'll be guiding you through what it means to vote!



Voting happens all the time.
It can be when your
parents ask you what
you want for dinner.

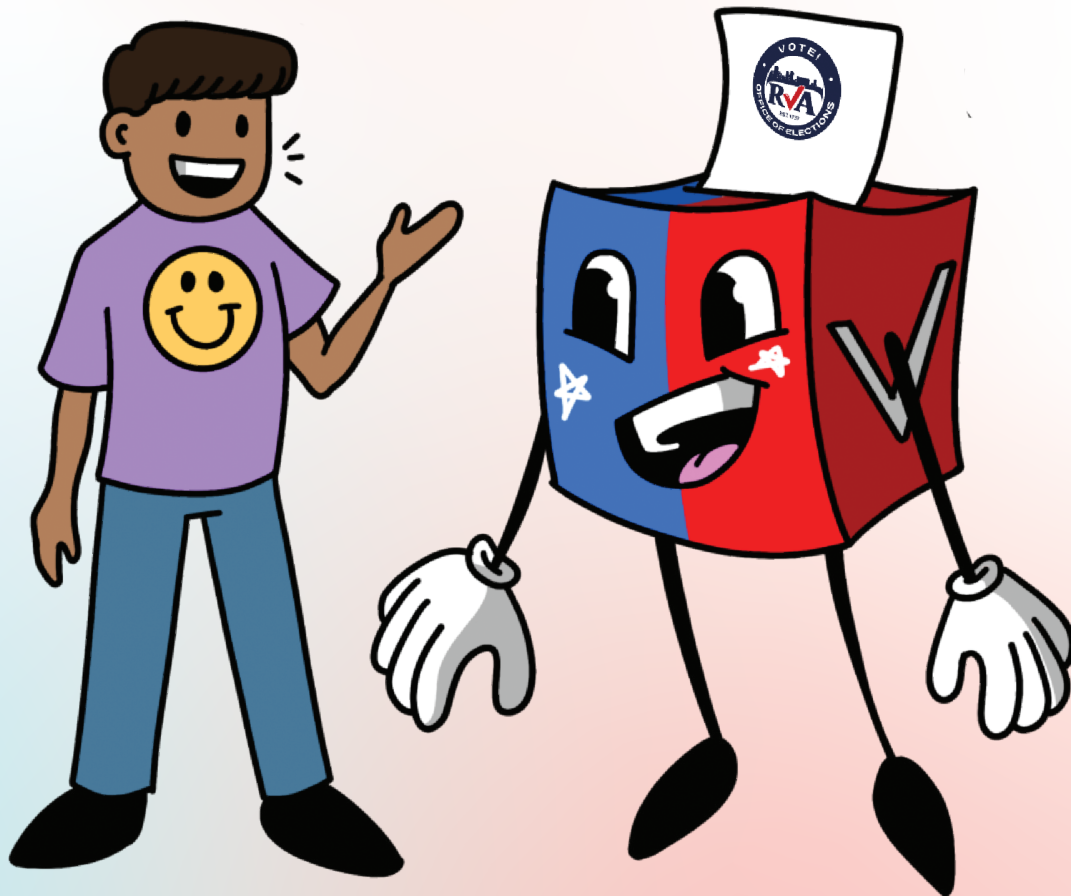


Or voting can mean
voting for a new president
or mayor.



But Billy,
when am I
allowed to
vote in the
election?!?

You are able
to vote when
you turn 18
years old!

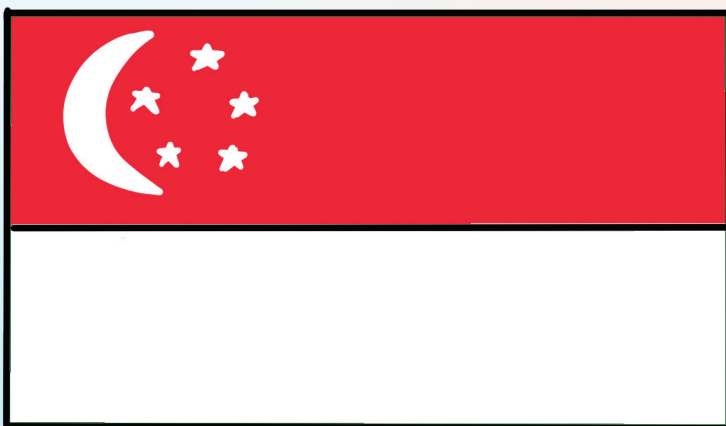


FUN FACTS

Other countries have different ages for voting.

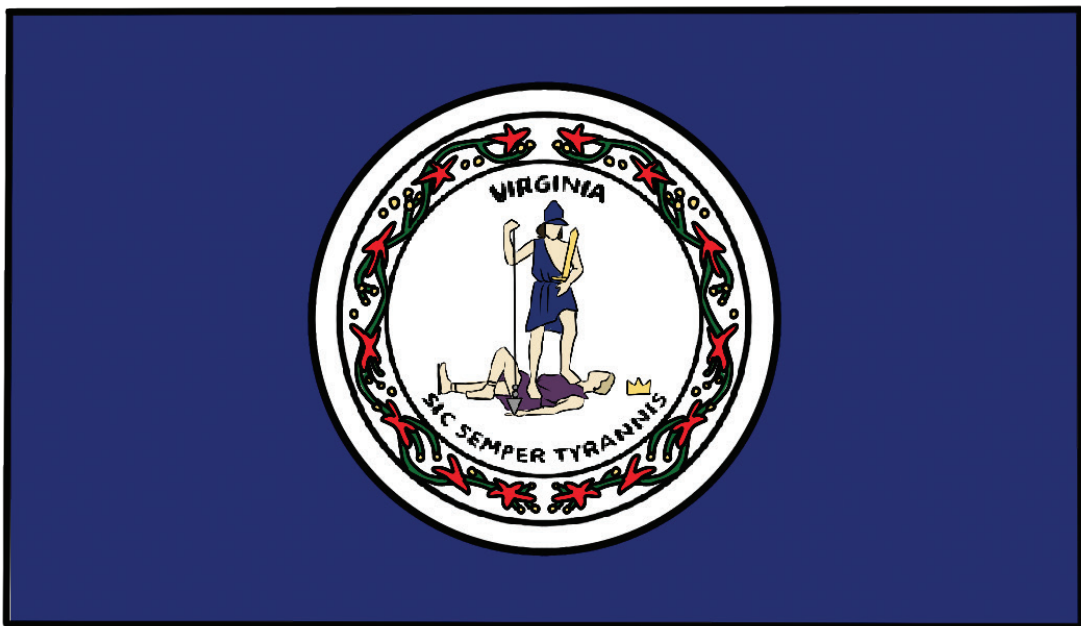


In Brazil, the voting age is 16.



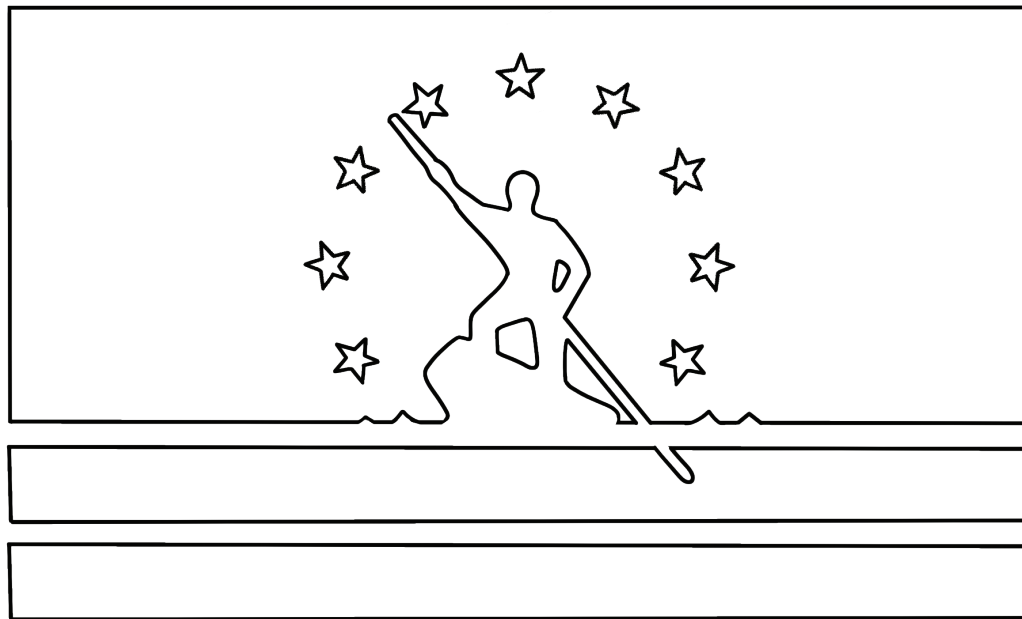
In Singapore, the voting age is 21.

VIRGINIA STATE FLAG



Every state has a flag. The Virginian state flag depicts a standing female figure of virtue standing on top of what is representing tyranny.

CITY OF RICHMOND FLAG



Color in the flag!

City of Richmond also has its own flag that you might have seen around already. The 9 stars represent territory that were once apart of Virginia, which were: **Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, West Virginia and Michigan.**

ROLE OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

1 There are 9 council members, each representing the different districts and the people living within the district.

2 Council members are elected by voters within their district to serve for four years.

3 Council members are responsible for passing city budgets, amending or creating local laws, and serving their communities.



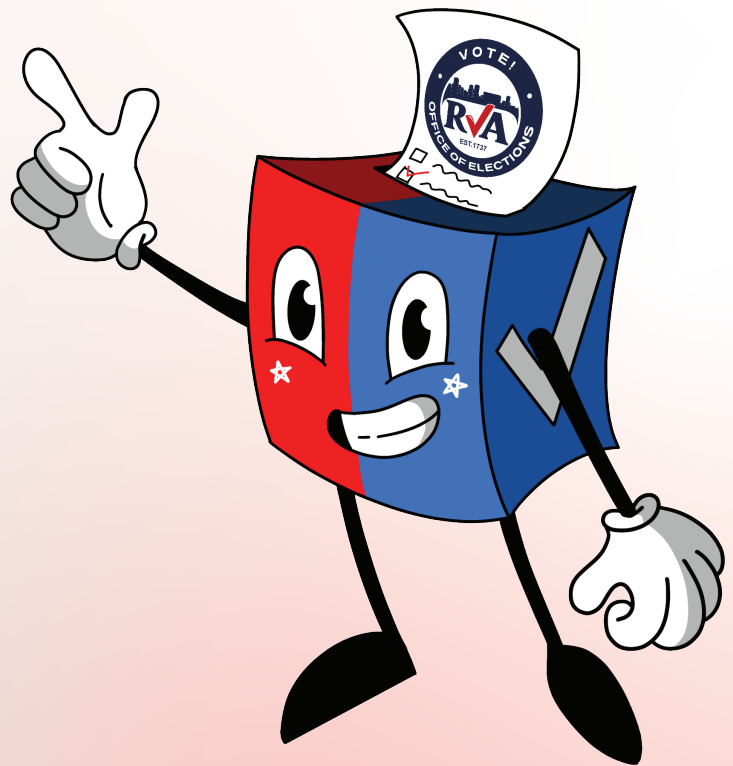
MAYOR

The city Mayor works closely with the council members to serve the city.

1 The Mayor is elected by voters to serve for four years and have two term limits.

2 The Mayor is responsible for administering city laws, public property, police and fire protection within the city limits.

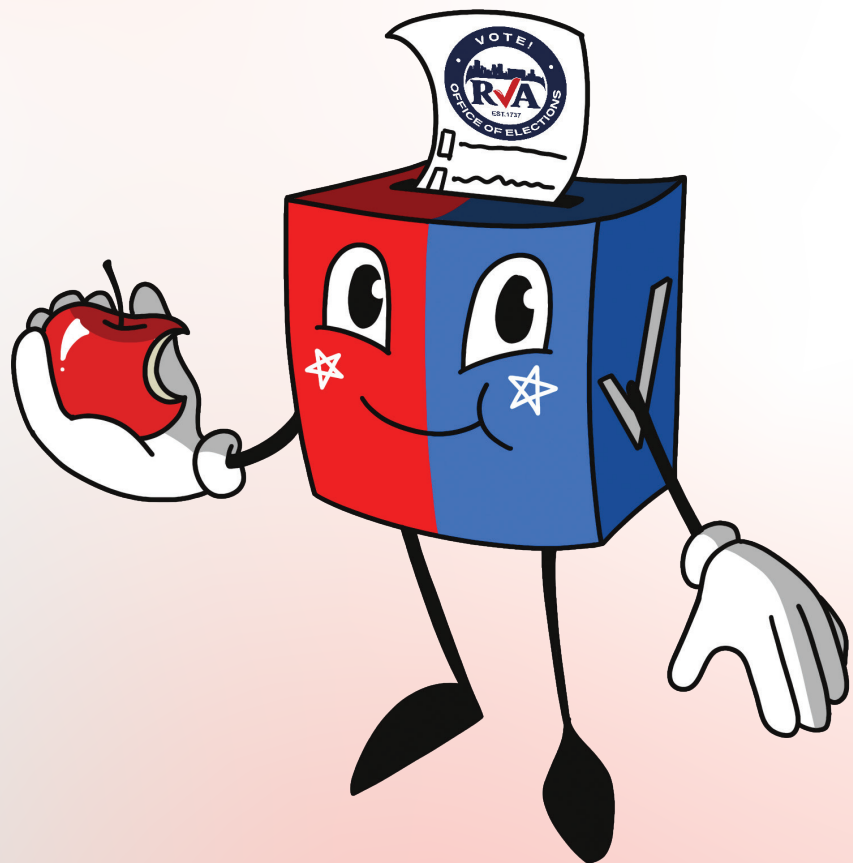
3 Can appoint directors or leaders for city offices and departments.



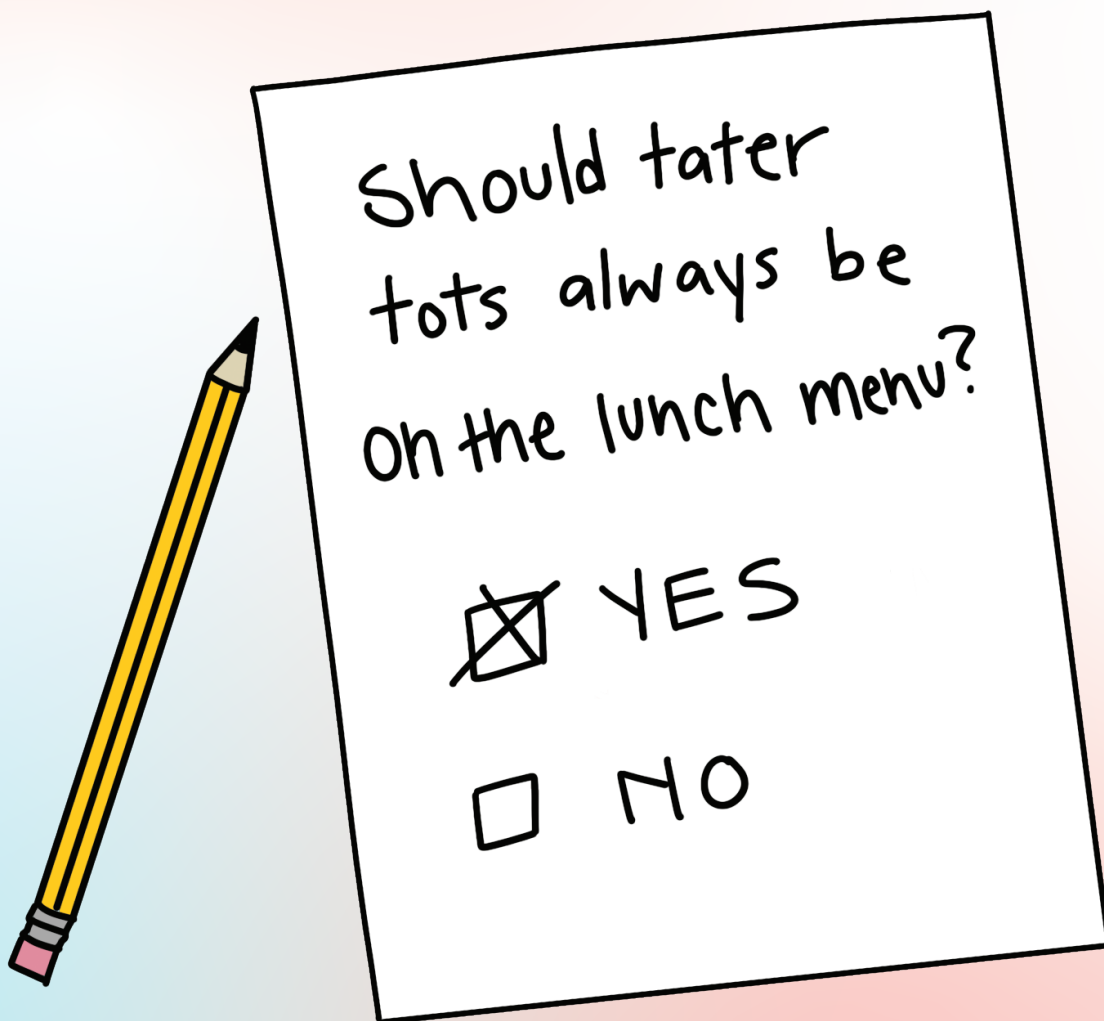
Every four years,
we vote for a president.



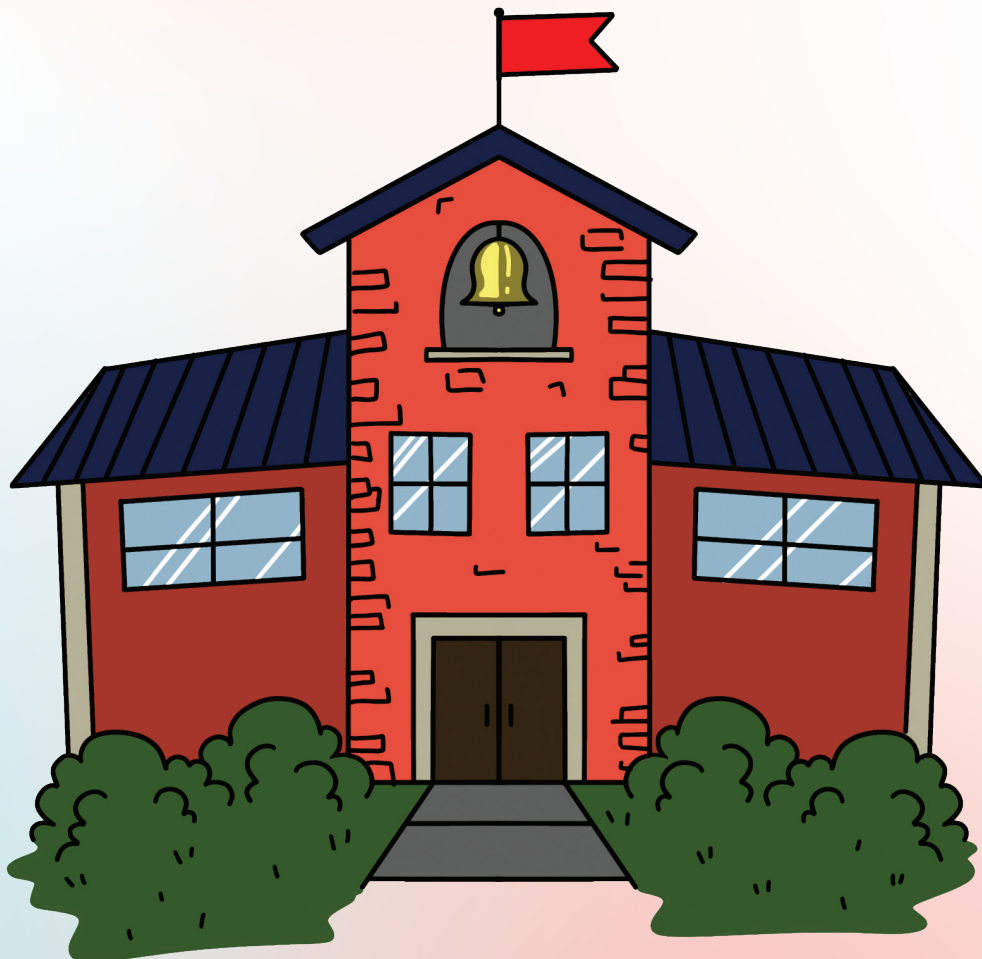
**At the local level, you also vote
for school board members,
sheriff, treasurer, commonwealth's
attorney, and clerk.**



Sometimes, there are special kinds of voting called **referendums** and constitutional amendments. A **referendum** is local and a constitutional amendment is statewide.



Similar to the council districts,
there are **9** different districts
with **9** school board members
representing students with
the districts.



Some duties of school board members include:

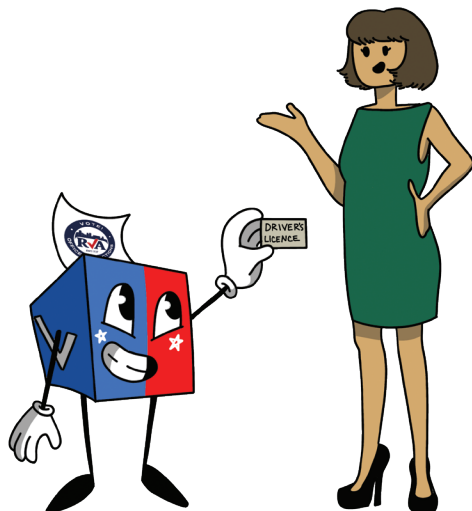
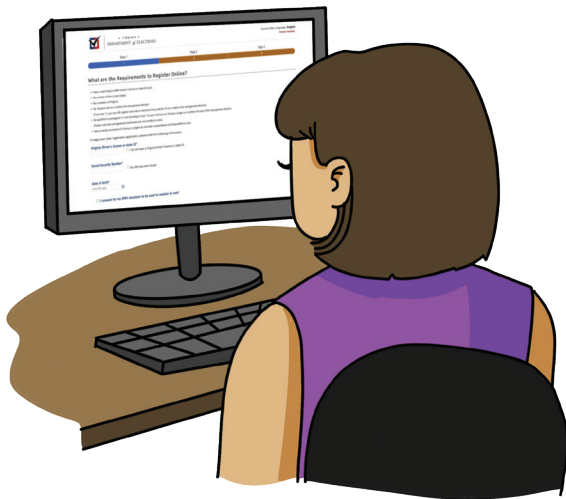
- Approving the budget for schools
- Establishing how long the school year is
- Appointing a superintendent



How do you register to vote?

You can register to vote:

- Online
- At the DMV when you get your driver's license
- In-person at your local election office
- Mail-in your application



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

1.

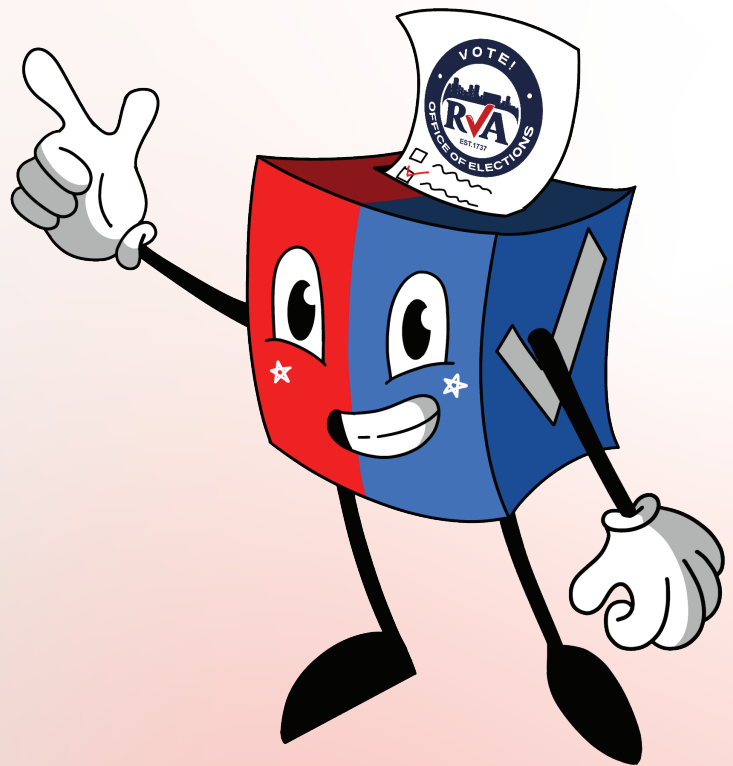
Always make a plan to register to vote before the deadline!

2.

Every time you move, you have to update your registration.

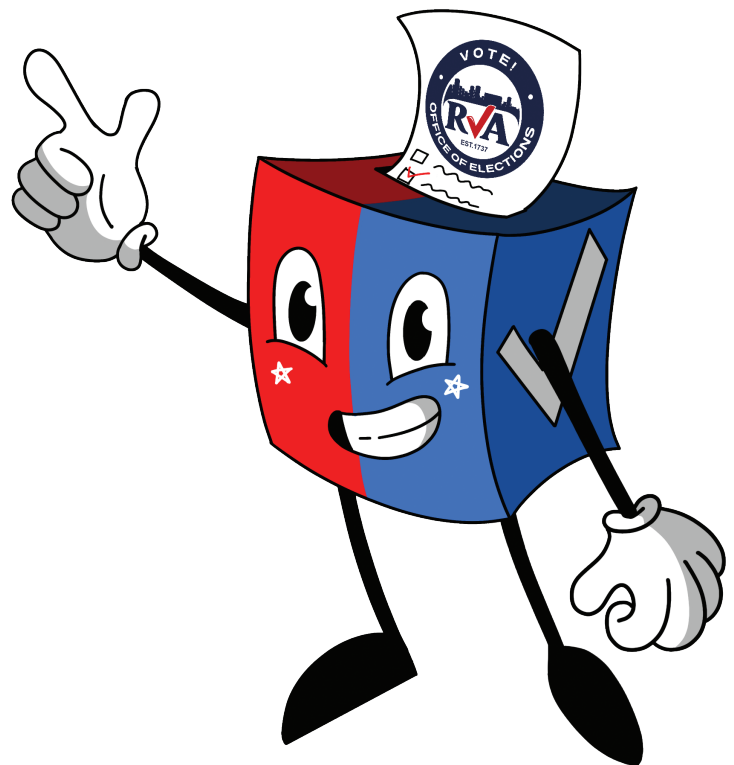
3.

Unlike other states, Virginia offers Same Day Registration (SDR). SDR is for voters who missed the voter registration deadline.



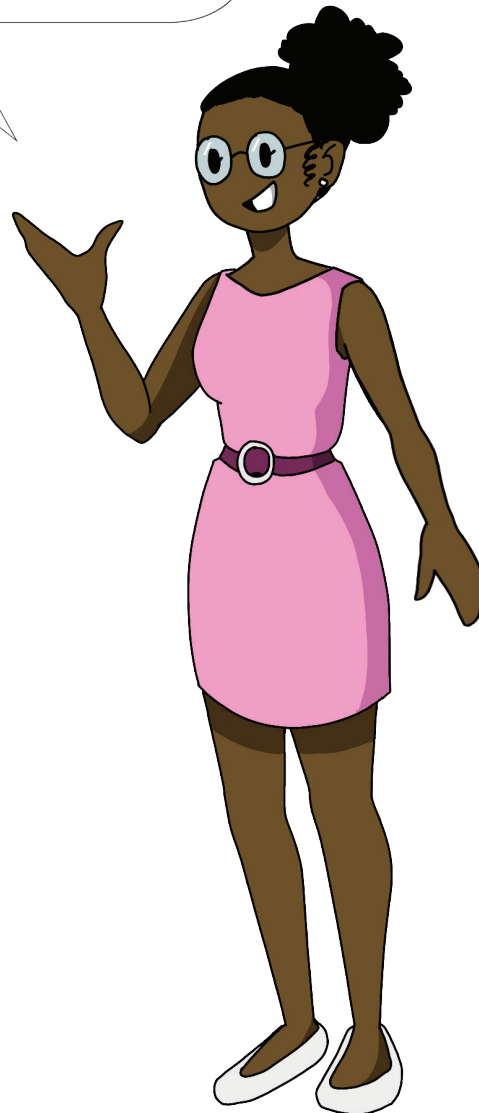
Every voter is entitled to these rights:

- If you made a mistake on your ballot,
ask for a new one
- Assistance from a poll worker
- Vote with privacy and dignity



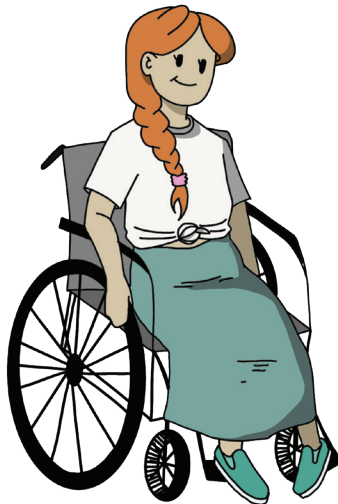
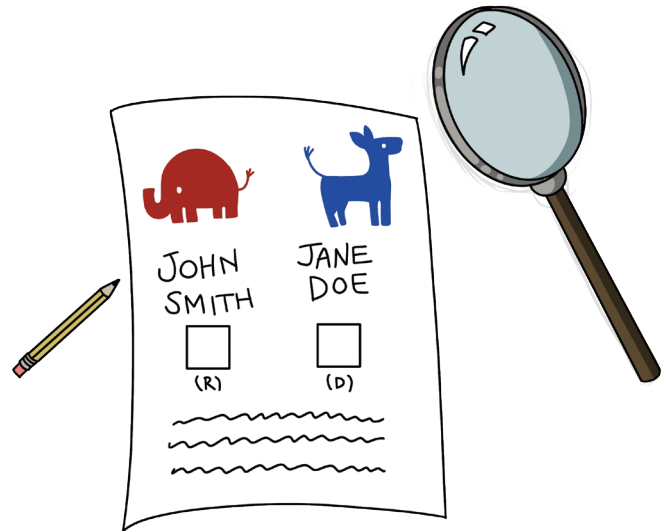
If you need help with voting at a polling location, Election Officers are here to help you cast your vote!

How can I help?

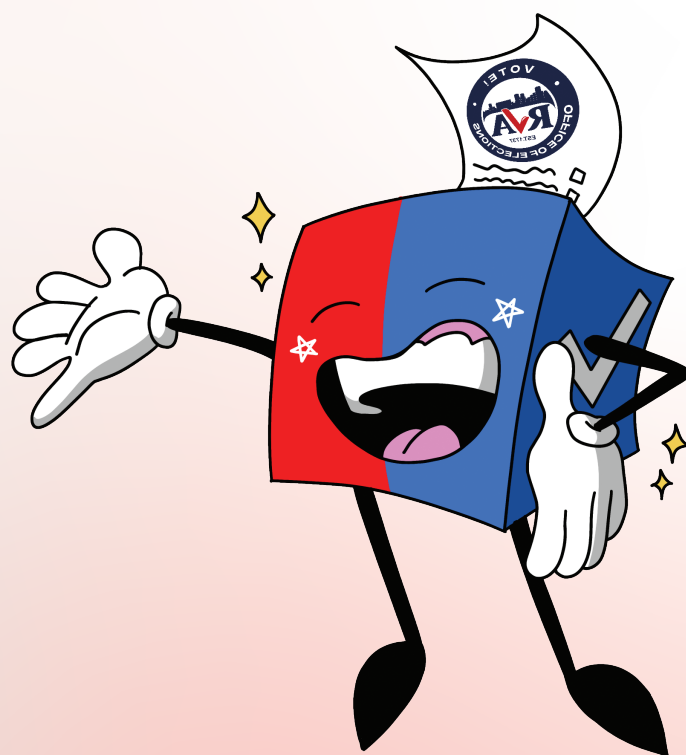


Ways Election Officers can help:

- Provide a sample ballot
- Offer to vote from your car
- Offer assistance to mark your ballot
- Hand you an "I Voted" sticker

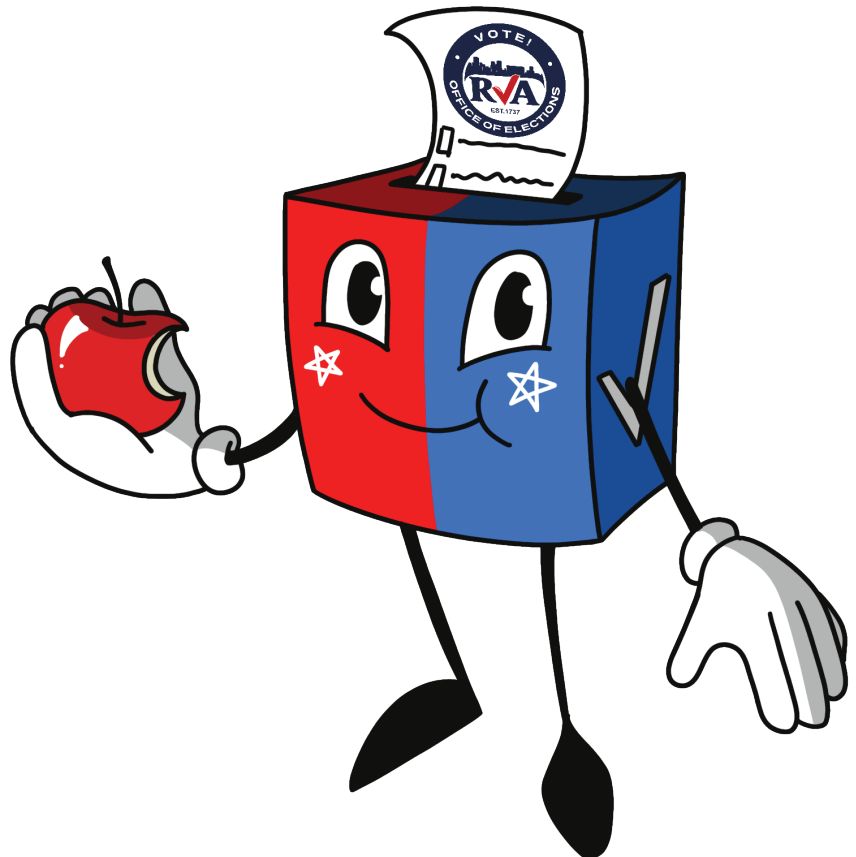


While voting is an important civic duty, it's not the only way you can serve your community!



Other ways to serve your community:

- Register people to vote
- Join your local voting organization
- Spread the word on voting rights
- Run for office



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